

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page features three concentric blue circles of varying sizes. Two thin blue lines intersect at a point on the left, extending diagonally across the page. A large, partially visible concentric blue circle is at the bottom right.

North Central Nebraska Tobacco Intervention

Intervention Implementation Lessons Learned

The Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition has identified a problem that too many youth are smoking cigarettes and using spit tobacco in the north-central region of Nebraska.

Ann Fritz, Resource Development Manager
2007/2008

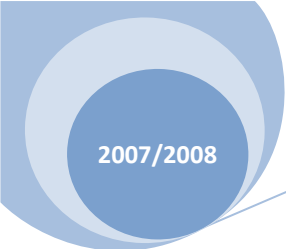


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The Tobacco Intervention Process

Kids experiment with tobacco products at a young age. Thus the purpose of this project was to reduce tobacco use by youth.



“If current youth tobacco use trends continue, 6.4 million of today’s young people will die from tobacco-related diseases. Nearly all first-time tobacco use occurs before high school graduation. This suggests that if kept tobacco-free, most youth will never start using tobacco.”¹ Also, “Teens that use tobacco are 11 times more likely to use cocaine, heroin and other illicit drugs and 16 times more likely to drink heavily,” reported by the *Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services: Tobacco Free Nebraska: Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People*.

The **Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition** came together from efforts of many key community leaders throughout a nine county area of north-central Nebraska. Their personal beliefs and attitudes of tobacco use represent their workplace and community environments. These leaders are representatives of area youth groups, school

nurses, attorneys, churches and mental health professionals. They combine their support in education, resources and expertise through each environment into a collaborative vision, “*Life without Tobacco.*”

The **Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition’s** purpose was to reduce tobacco use among youth through leadership by youth. The objective of the **Coalition** was to educate youth, ages 18 and under in North Central Nebraska, about *life without tobacco*. There are 13,648 youth ages 18 and under residing in the nine county region.² In 1999, thirty-five percent of adolescents were current cigarette smokers.³ Nationally, direct medical costs attributable to smoking total at least \$50 billion per year. Empowering youth to take action remains the distinct vision of the **Coalition**.

The **Coalition’s** vision, “*Life without Tobacco,*” helps to identify not only the group’s purpose, but also a realization of the problems that our youth continue to face today.

The former U.S. Surgeon, General David Satcher noted,
“Our lack of greater progress in tobacco control is more the result of our failure to implement proven strategies than it is the lack of knowledge about what to do.”

Strategies...

The **Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition** feels strongly that empowering our youth as leaders for this initiative, increases the involvement of youth for changed behavior.

The Healthy People 2010 Objective related to this effort is: 7-11 Culturally appropriate community health promotion programs. The **Public Health Essential Services** addressed by this project include:



- 1 Monitor Health Status,
- 3 Inform, Educate and Empower,
- 4 Mobilize Partnerships,
- 5 Develop Policies and Plans, and
- 7 Link People

The **Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition** chose to primarily focus on three areas of intervention:

- 1 *Initiate* an area youth tobacco prevention summit;
- 2 *Involve* youth, of the area with plans, activities and provide them education about the dangers of tobacco use. The youth's involvement was key in the nationally known “Operation Storefront: Youth Against Tobacco Advertising and Promotion” program; and
- 3 to *Assess* and *improve* school tobacco policies by providing guidance and illustration of the local issues at hand.



Data for the Cause

The **Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition** evaluation targeted the demographic, social, economic and political situations in the communities. The **measurable components** included:



Life without Tobacco

- 1** *Identification and documentation* of the youth organizations with a focus on tobacco prevention. The identified youth groups attended the “*Life without Tobacco*” Youth Summit and documentation of the number and geographic location of the youth in attendance was recorded;
- 2** *Documentation* of retail tobacco outlets and the number of marketing tools visible on location throughout the nine county area; and
- 3** *Documentation* of the number of schools that allowed the **Coalition** to review their school tobacco policies.

The **methods of evaluation** for this plan involved:

- 1** Operation Storefront Inspection Surveys;
- 2** Evaluations of the Youth Summit by participants;
- 3** Letters to School Administrators and School Boards;
- 4** Collection of School Tobacco Policies; and an
- 5** Evaluation Worksheet

The **data collection** for this plan was:

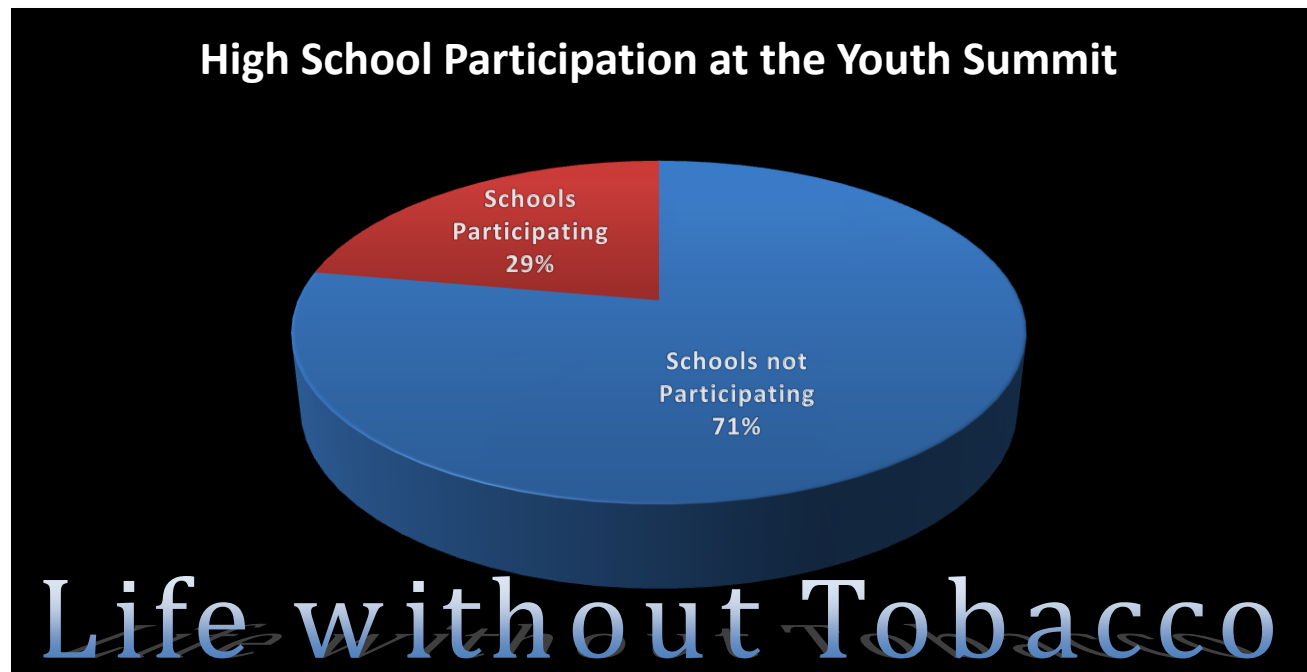
- 1** Number of schools with tobacco policies;
- 2** Number of tobacco prevention youth groups;
- 3** Number of retail Operation Storefront inspections completed; and
- 4** Number of media publications



Life without Tobacco

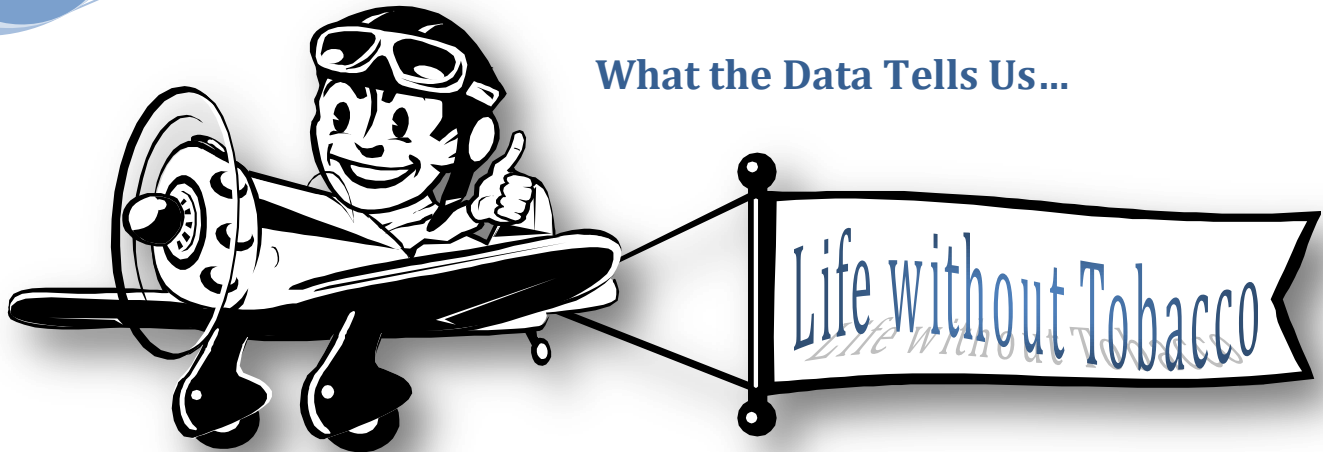
What the Data Tells Us...

The design of this project primarily focused on the empowerment and mobilization of youth, with consideration for enhancement of statewide efforts of the **Tobacco Free Nebraska** program. The goal of the project was to *Reduce Tobacco Use of Youth*.



The **1st** outcome entailed the “*Life without Tobacco*” Youth Summit. This identified the existence of youth groups in the 9 counties, primarily with an interest in tobacco prevention. **Fifty-four** youth from **8 schools** attended the summit on February 20, 2008, from a total of 28 high schools district-wide.

The local youth summit provided the youth and their sponsors the opportunities to learn about the dangers of tobacco use, gain skills to make positive decisions and develop models used to cope with stress. The summit was an avenue for the youth groups to learn the process of “**Operation Storefront: Youth Against Tobacco Advertising and Promotion**”, a nationally known program that raises awareness of the tobacco industry’s strategies to use retail advertising and promotions toward youth. Youth groups from the 8 area schools became involved through active participation in the project. The *first outcome* falls into **Public Health Essential Services: #3 – Inform, Educate and Empower; #4 – Mobilize Partnerships; and #7 – to Link People**.



What the Data Tells Us...

The **2nd** outcome targeted a reduction of the number of vendors that provide tobacco products to youth by the completion of **10** “*Operation Storefront*” inspections. **Three youth groups** completed the on premise inspections that resulted in **118** tobacco ads located inside local retail businesses. Identified on the exterior of the businesses were **42** tobacco ads on the windows and doors with **11** additional tobacco ads on the sidewalks and in the parking lots.

The *second outcome* falls into **Public Health Essential Services: #1 – Monitor Health Status; #3 – Inform, Educate and Empower; #4 – Mobilize Partnerships; and #7 – to Link People.**



The **3rd** outcome involved the collection of current *School Tobacco Policies*. The **Coalition** collected *School Tobacco Policies* from **Twenty-one** schools in the North Central Region of Nebraska. The *Social Sciences Research Center* at **Wayne State College** compiled a report of the *School Tobacco Policies* for the **Coalition**.

The report compared content of the individual school policies to model tobacco policies from the *National Association of State Boards of Education* and the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. The *School Tobacco Policies Report* was printed and mailed to high schools in the North Central Region of Nebraska.

The *third outcome* falls into **Public Health Essential Service: #5 – Develop Policies and Plans.**

What Did We Learn?

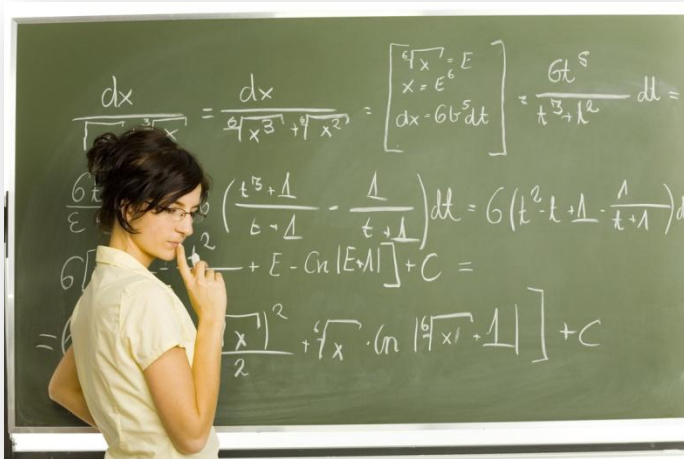
There are many **barriers** identified from the process of this project by the project coordinator.

These **barriers** include:



- 1 Repeated contacts needed with schools to get commitment for them to attend Youth Summit.
- 2 Lack of follow through on the part of the schools to implement "**Operation Storefront**".
- 3 Time barriers for schools to implement "**Operation Storefront**".
- 4 Time needed for repeated contacts to obtain school tobacco policies.
- 5 Timing of rolling out "**Operation Storefront**"
Spring is a busy time.
- 6 Difficulty bringing the coalition back together.
- 7 Our geographical area- number of miles.
- 8 Staff time (staff involved in other similar projects).

There were several lessons that were learned. The **Lessons Learned** includes:



- 1 Timing is an issue for rolling out planned activities.
- 2 Schools are reluctant to add activities to their school day.
- 3 Need to enhance communication with school administrators and sponsors to ensure understanding of commitment.
- 4 Need more time for planning of a quality summit.
- 5 Consider having two summits due to geographical issues.

The knowledge gained from these past experiences will help build new insight for process development, time management and communication.

Looking Ahead

The focus of the “*North Central Nebraska Tobacco Intervention*” sustainability plan will bring a continuation for partnership development through linkages and resources built throughout the second-year project. Central to the program’s sustainability are factors such as availability of staff for support and education of the area youth groups, staff qualifications and experience, continuing partnerships with other health and human resources, and an evaluation plan. Capacity building activities directly related to project sustainability involve the creation and implementation of a strategic plan.



Development of a strategic plan will ensure program sustainability through:



- 1 Communication with the media about the initiatives’ goals, objectives and outcomes to increase community awareness and education about the effects of tobacco use.
- 2 Development for a sense of ownership of the project’s goals and vision.
- 3 Ensure that the most effective use is made of local resources by projecting focus on the resources of the key initiatives.
- 4 Make available a base for utilization by the **Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition** to assess systems change for reduction of tobacco use by youth and providing as a mechanism for behavioral change. Surveys and documentation of youth group activities will continue to assist with efforts to determine the extent of barriers of the second-year project.
- 5 Collaboration of everyone’s best and most reasoned efforts to build a consensus about future endeavors. The **coalition** will meet on a continued basis to discuss avenues for improved service delivery.
- 6 Provide a plan for shared training and continued education opportunities to improve systems change and knowledge among youth and the population as a whole, and also increase each **coalition** member’s capacity addressing the reduction of tobacco use by youth.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Association of Boards of Education

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

“No Limits” Nebraska

Operation Storefront: Youth Against Tobacco Advertising and Promotion

School Tobacco Policies; a review of model and school tobacco policies

Dr. Joseph Nitske, Social Sciences Research Center, Wayne State College

Tobacco Free Nebraska

Life without Tobacco

End Notes

¹ *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007*

² *US Census 2000*

³ *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. 1991–99. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Health Interview Survey. 1990–98.*

Life without Tobacco